

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 188943

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PORG, PDEV, CU, RQ, UNGA

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO CUBANS ON PUERTO RICO

REF: A) STATE 186242, B) HAVANA 2003

1. USINT WILL HAVE SEEN FROM REF A AND WIRE SERVICES THAT PRES CARTER ISSUED PROCLAMATION ON PUERTO RICO JULY 25. AS INSTRUCTED BY REF A, SEVERAL POSTS HAVE ALREADY MADE DEMARCHES TO HOST GOVTS TO EXPLAIN OUR POSITION AND ASK FOR SUPPORT IN UN. DEPT BELIEVES WE SHOULD FOLLOW UP WITH APPROACH TO GOC. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE SEEK APPOINTMENT AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL MINREX AND DRAW UPON FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

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-- GOC WILL HAVE SEEN PRES CARTER'S JULY 25 PROCLAMATION REAFFIRMING SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO. PRES'S MESSAGE MAKES IT CLEAR HE WILL SUPPORT IN CONGRESS ANY STATUS CHOSEN BY PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES, BE IT INDEPENDENCE, STATEHOOD OR CONTINUED COMMONWEALTH ARRANGEMENT. GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO INDICATES HE PLANS TO CALL FOR REFERENDUM FOLLOWING 1980 ELECTIONS.

--REPORTEDLY, PRES CASTRO RECENTLY STATED TO VISITING AMERICAN MAYORS THAT WHILE CUBA BELIEVED PUERTO RICO SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT, IT WOULD ACCEPT ANY STATUS FREELY CHOSEN BY PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES. THIS IS NOT BASICALLY CONFLICTIVE WITH OUR OWN POSITION; WE TOO BELIEVE THE MATTER SHOULD BE DECIDED BY PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE AND WE ARE PERFECTLY WILLING TO ACCEPT INDEPENDENCE IF THAT IS THEIR CHOICE.

--WE BELIEVE THAT PRES'S STATEMENT PLACES THE ISSUE IN ITS PROPER CONTEXT BY LEAVING DECISION TO PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO. AN ACRIMONIOUS DEBATE IN UN COMMITTEE OF 24 THIS YEAR WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO A SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM AND COULD WELL COMPLICATE RELATED MATTERS.

--WE DO NOT ASK THAT CUBA CHANGE ITS BASIC POSITION ON PUERTO RICO, BUT SINCE PRES HAS NOW STATED THE READINESS OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT ANY DECISION REACHED BY PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO IN EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO MAKE PUERTO RICO AN ISSUE IN UN THIS YEAR. HENCE, WE HOPE CUBA WILL ACCEPT POSTPONEMENT OF A SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE. WE BELIEVE SUCH RESTRAINT ON CUBA'S PART WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED IN US AND WOULD DO MUCH TO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. CHRISTOPHER
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